Guidelines for Presentation and Response Papers

A. In-Class Presentation Guidelines

During most scheduled seminar meetings, there will be a student presentation. Class presentations may be presented individually or in groups of two. The primary purpose of these presentations is to serve as a basis for class discussion, so please prepare them with that in mind. Your in-class presentations counts for 20% of your final grade. Your presentation should focus on the facilitation of your assigned weekly readings. Therefore, presentations should cover the readings assigned for the class session in which they are delivered, and may also address the topic of the readings more generally. You may choose to divide up the readings, or to jointly prepare all assigned readings. Your presentation will be evaluated on the quality and accuracy of substantive content and the organization and creativity embodied in the form of the presentation.

Each individual presentation is responsible for:

1. Presenting a summary of the substantive content, major theses and core concepts of material related to the chosen topic. Your presentations should remind the class of key points of the readings in a brief synopsis. DO NOT PRESENT A COMPLETE SUMMARY. A good presentation omits most of the readings' content, covering only the most important points;

2. Engaging the class in discussion and/or some form of interaction relative to the topic material. Trying to cover everything guarantees a bad presentation. Remember that the purpose of the presentation is to facilitate class discussion. Long exhaustive summaries of the readings do the opposite. the presentation should lead into class discussion. You will be responsible for facilitating class discussion for about a half hour. Presenters should prepare questions to start and guide such a discussion (which you will be primarily responsible for leading);

3. Making connections between your presentation and other class concepts/readings;

4. BRIEFLY critique the readings and/or raise additional issues. For example, if a reading presents an argument, how convincing do you find the argument? Why? Can you think of additional examples or applications of the reading? What questions did the author either not satisfactorily address, or not ask at all? How does the reading relate to other concepts or issues dealt with in class? In short, this is where you should raise some ideas for class discussion that go beyond mere summary;

5. Employing creativity in the presentation style
Length

A good guideline for presentations is that they should last no more than 40 minutes (total, so if there are two presenters, 20 minutes each), followed by approximately 30 minutes of presenter-led discussion.

B. Response Papers Guidelines

The Dos and Don'ts of Response Papers:

DO NOT: Only summarize readings
DO: Cortically assess the thematic and analytical/theoretical significance of the readings

DO NOT: Say you didn't like the author’s arguments
DO: Explain why you did not like the author’s arguments,

DO NOT: Generalize and provide vague reasons behind your analysis
DO: Use specific examples from the text (including quotes, evidence, arguments, facts if significant).

DO NOT: Make superficial, obvious insights
DO: Think deeply, and look closely into the work. Notice things that a casual reader would not.

DO NOT: Simply repeat ideas mentioned in class by the instructor or by other students.
DO: Build off ideas mentioned in class, adding your own thoughts and insights to the discussion.

Length: Not more than 5 pages double-space, excluding the title page and bibliography

**Remember:** Response papers must be submitted on time. They will be evaluated on the basis of focus, development, use of evidence, critical thinking, creativity, and level of insight. They will count as 20% of your final grade.

In a response paper, you do assess the item you’ve been assigned to observe, but you add your personal reaction and impressions to the report.

The steps for completing a reaction or response paper are:

- Observe or read the piece for an initial understanding
- Re-read the piece and stop to reflect often
- Record your thoughts and impressions in notes
- Develop a thesis
- Write an outline
- Construct your essay